

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02 /047 W
-----031298 230543Z /11

R 221050Z JUL 78
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6483
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, IZ
SUBJECT: ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS: LOOKING BACK

REF: BAGHDAD 1481

1. ALMOST ALL OF THE DELEGATIONS HAVE LEFT, THE BUNTING IS SLOWLY COLLECTING IN THE GUTTERS AND, FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES, THE JULY CELEBRATIONS ARE OVER. THERE WAS NO COUP, THERE WERE NO (KNOWN) TERRORIST INCIDENTS, AND THE ENTIRE SERIES OF EVENTS WAS AT LEAST A MILESTONE, AT MOST A DISPLAY OF PARTIAL UNITY, RELATIVE STABILITY, AND CONSIDERABLE TENACITY.

2. THE SEARING HEAT WAVE COUPLED WITH EXTRAORDINARY HUMIDITY DAMPENED BOTH THE PERSONS AND ENTHUSIASM OF MOST
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OF THE FOREIGN VISITORS, WHO HAD TO COPE WITH THE PROBLEMS OF CROWDED SCHEDULES, LIMITED FACILITIES,(AND NORMAL FOUL-UPS. THE PEOPLE OF IRAQ, HOWEVER, APPEARED GENUINELY TO ENJOY THE FESTIVITIES AND TO PARTICIPATE FREELY AND ACTIVELY IN EXPRESSIONS OF SOLIDARITY.

3. DEPENDING ON HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, THE PEOPLES' PARADE

ON THE NIGHT OF THE 17TH WAS EITHER THE HIGH POINT OR THE LOW POINT OF THE CELEBRATIONS. THE REPORTED 250,000 PEOPLE THAT SHAMBLED PAST THE REVIEWING STAND REQUIRED EIGHT HOURS FOR THE PURPOSE. THE VAST NUMBER OF FOREIGN DELEGATIONS THAT WERE EXPECTED TO REMAIN IN THEIR SEATS FROM 8:00 P.M. UNTIL 4:00 A.M. FOUND THIS DISPLAY BORING, TASTELESS, AND EXCESSIVELY LONG. THE IRAQIS, HOWEVER, ESPECIALLY THE OFFICIALS, REPORTEDLY FELT THAT IT WAS A SIGN OF THE AFFECTION AND SUPPORT WHICH THE PEOPLE OF IRAQ GIVE THEIR LEADERSHIP. CERTAINLY THE FACT THAT PRESIDENT BAKR REMAINED STANDING FOR ALMOST THE ENTIRE SPECTACLE CAN BE CONSIDERED SIGNIFICANT. QUESTIONS ABOUT HIS HEALTH -- AT LEAST UP TO THAT POINT -- SEEM TO HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVELY ANSWERED.

4. WE ARE NOT AWARE OF ANY DISTURBANCES THAT TOOK PLACE IN BAGHDAD. A FEW ANTI-BAATH SLOGANS APPEARED HERE AND THERE, BUT WERE NEITHER PROMINENTLY LOCATED NOR NUMEROUS. SECURITY WAS TIGHT, BUT NOT EXCESSIVE, AND A RELATIVELY RELAXED ATMOSPHERE PERVADED THE CAPITAL.

5. COMMENT: THE DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY IS OF THE OPINION THAT VIRTUALLY NONE OF THE DELEGATIONS LEFT WITH VERY FAVORABLE IMPRESSIONS, DUE MOSTLY TO THE HARDSHIPS AND INCONVENIENCES TO WHICH THEY WERE EXPOSED. FURTHER, THERE WERE SO MANY OF THEM FOR THE GOI TO HANDLE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT VERY FEW FELT THAT THEY WERE TREATED APPROPRIATELY. ON THE WHOLE, THROUGH THE EYES OF A FOREIGN OBSERVER, THE JULY CELEBRATIONS APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN A REASONABLE EXPRESSION OF THE STATE OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS IN IRAQ: BAKR-HUSSEIN ARE IN CHARGE, CLEARLY EXPECT TO REMAIN SO FOR SOME TIME, AND ENJOY SUFFICIENT SUPPORT TO ADD CONSIDERABLE CREDENCE TO THEIR BELIEFS. PECK

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